CHAPTER 12

Internationalism and Global Issues

Article in Short Supply

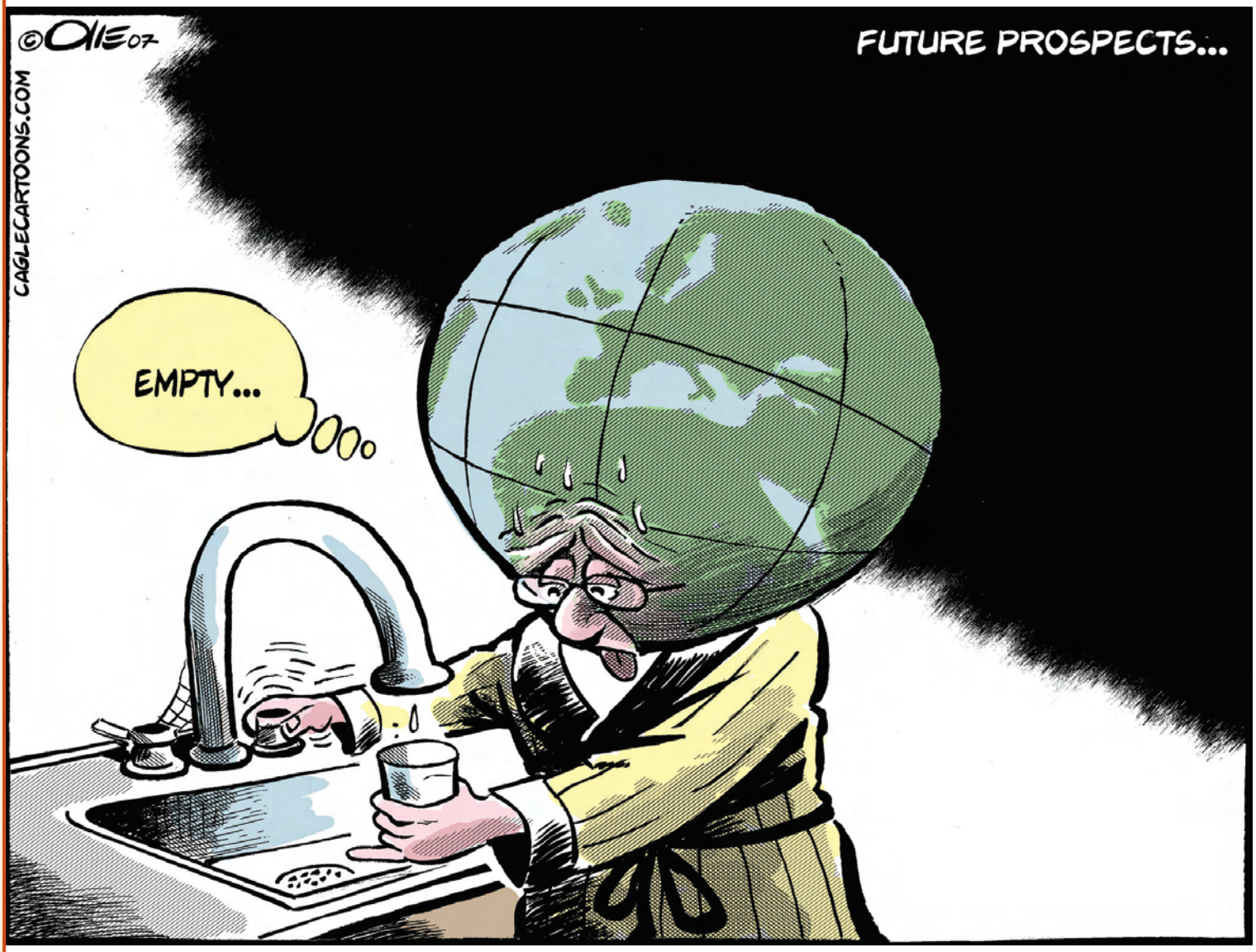


Figure 12-1 This cartoon by Olle Johansson of Sweden comments on predictions that the world's supply of fresh, clean water is disappearing.

CHAPTER ISSUE

How effectively does internationalism address contemporary global issues?

KEY TERMS

absolute poverty

odious debt

civil society

CANADA HAS MORE fresh, clean water than most other countries. Many Canadians take access to water for granted — taking long showers, watering lawns, and washing cars. The average Canadian uses about 335 litres of water a day, much more than people in most other countries.

People in many countries don't even have access to clean drinking water. In Cambodia and Rwanda, for example, people have access to less than 50 litres of water a day, and this water often spreads diseases because it is not clean.

Many people believe that water is a basic human need. They say that water belongs to everyone and that countries with lots of clean water should share with countries that do not have enough water.

Examine the cartoon on the preceding page, then respond to the following questions:

- What is the cartoonist's message?
- Should Canadians keep their water for themselves? Or should they share their water with people in other countries?
- Most people get their water from lakes and rivers near their homes. What makes access to clean water a global issue?
- How might not having access to clean water become a source of conflict within and between countries?

LOOKING AHEAD

In this chapter, you will examine how effectively internationalism addresses contemporary global issues. You will do this by responding to the following questions:

- What are some contemporary global issues?
- How have people used internationalism to address contemporary global issues?
- How effective is internationalism in addressing contemporary global issues?

My Journal on Nationalism

Use words or images — or both — to record your current ideas about internationalism. Are your ideas changing as you progress through this related issue? If so, how? If not, why not? Date your ideas and keep them in your journal, notebook, learning log, portfolio, or computer file so that you can revisit them.

Figure 12-2 These young pandas were resting near a landslide caused by the earthquake that rocked China's Sichuan Province in May 2008. Pandas are an endangered species, and UNESCO has listed Sichuan Province's panda sanctuaries as a world heritage site. These pandas were later moved to temporary homes in a safer area. What influence do you think the UNESCO designation of the panda sanctuaries might have had on the decision to move the pandas out of danger?

What are some contemporary global issues?

Today, people around the world are more closely connected than ever before. Television and the Internet mean that people everywhere can communicate almost instantly. Problems that might once have concerned only a limited number of people can quickly become global issues — social, political, economic, or environmental challenges that cut across national borders and concern many people around the world.

In May 2008, for example, an earthquake in China killed thousands of people and left millions without food and shelter. Within hours, people around the world saw TV and Internet news reports of the event. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals quickly tried to help.

As people have become more connected, they have also become more aware that some global issues — climate change, disease, and access to water — concern everyone on Earth.

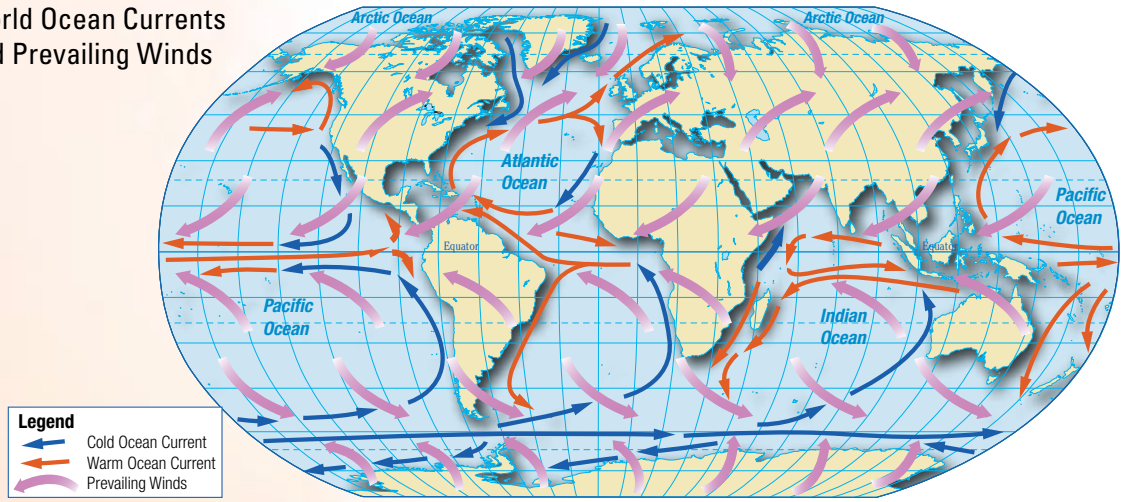
Climate Change

Ocean currents and prevailing winds carry pollution from one country into the air and water of other countries. As a result, pollution — greenhouse gas emissions, carbon monoxide, nuclear waste, and toxic waste — in one country can cause major problems well beyond that country's borders.

Examine the map in Figure 12-3. Does this map show the need for an international approach to resolving the challenges of climate change? Explain your response.

The Kyoto Protocol, which was proposed in 1997, is an international attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gases contribute to global climate change. Canada and other developed countries that signed this protocol agreed to reduce their emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2020. But since then, Canada has said that it will not meet its Kyoto targets. The government has said that doing so could cost the Canadian economy and Canadians $51 billion.

Figure 12-3 World Ocean Currents and Prevailing Winds



The Spread of Disease

The spread of disease from one person to another — across national boundaries — has been a global issue for a long time. At the end of World War I in 1918, a deadly form of flu, or influenza, spread around the world. Scientists now believe this flu started as a disease in birds and jumped first to pigs and then to humans. The flu spread quickly among soldiers fighting in the mud and filth of the trenches in Europe. When the soldiers returned home, they spread the disease to civilians.

The parades and crowds of people celebrating the end of the war on November 11, 1918, helped spread the flu until it became a pandemic — an epidemic that affects many people over a large geographic area.

Health care workers and hospitals had trouble helping everyone who was sick. Public health departments closed schools and theatres, and discouraged people from shaking hands when they met. Some historians believe that as many as 50 million people, including more than 50 000 Canadians, died in the 1918 pandemic.

Figure 12-4 During the deadly 1918 flu epidemic, people across Canada were afraid of becoming ill. These telephone operators in High River, Alberta, wore masks to try to prevent infection.

Trying to Stop the Spread of Disease

The World Health Organization is the United Nations agency that tries to stop the spread of deadly diseases. The WHO focuses on global health issues: identifying, monitoring, and controlling international health threats. During the 2002–2003 SARS epidemic, for example, the WHO worked with other international and national organizations to help prevent SARS from infecting more people.

<<< CheckBack

You read about SARS and the World Health Organization in Chapters 9 and 11.

Medical researchers around the world work with the WHO to try to understand and control viruses that cause epidemics. Michael James, a professor of biochemistry at the University of Alberta, is one of those researchers. He and his team are trying to understand the SARS virus. The results of their research will be combined with the research of other scientists to help bring viruses like this under control.

The WHO is worried about the next serious outbreak of flu. Although flu is rarely life-threatening, every year it appears in a different form, or strain. Some years, the strain is more dangerous than others. The WHO constantly prepares for the next health threat that might become an epidemic — or even a pandemic.

Is an international organization such as the WHO needed to control 21st-century pandemics? Or should countries be left to take action on their own?

Figure 12-5 Margaret Chan of China is the director general of the World Health Organization. In August 2007, she released a WHO report that said international co-operation was needed to fight the threat of infectious diseases.

Figure 12-6 In May 2001, bird flu was discovered among ducks and geese at a farm in Abbotsford, B.C. Canadian Food Inspection Agency officials ordered the slaughter of the birds and posted this sign to warn people to stay away from the farm. How might national actions like this help limit the spread of the flu around the world?

Figure 12-7 On March 22, 2006, people in Bangalore, India, participated in a rally to celebrate World Water Day. How would you explain the slogan "Water is life"? How does this slogan relate to the need for access to clean water?

Bird Flu

Bird flu, also called avian influenza, is common among many species of birds — chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigeons, and swans. Most strains of this flu don't infect humans. But in 1997, one strain caused the death of six people in Hong Kong. To stop the spread of the disease, public health officials in the city ordered the slaughter of 1.4 million chickens.

The World Health Organization believes that the H5N1 strain of bird flu is especially dangerous because it has jumped the species barrier from birds to humans. And it is deadly. WHO researchers say the virus that causes this strain looks a lot like the virus that caused the 1918 flu pandemic. In 2004, some people in Vietnam died of the H5N1 bird flu. In 2006, more people died in Cambodia, Thailand, China, Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq.

Compared to earlier epidemics, the death toll from bird flu is low: 75 people had died by the end of 2006. One reason for this low number may be that governments and public health officials around the world have worked together to plan ways to protect their citizens. Canada, for example, has an influenza pandemic plan that was put together by federal, provincial, and territorial governments in 2006. The plan includes instructions on how to prevent, prepare, and respond to the threat of influenza.

Access to Water

Most Canadians have access to plenty of fresh, clean water. Some estimates say that Canada has up to 20 per cent of the world's fresh water but just 0.5 per cent of the world's population.

In many countries, people do not have access to clean water. In 2006, the United Nations reported that more than 1.1 billion people — about 17 per cent of all the people on Earth — did not have access to an adequate supply of clean water. Every year, about 1.8 million children die because of diseases spread in water. Every eight seconds, for example, a child dies after drinking dirty water.

Water as a Human Right

Since 2002, some members of the United Nations have argued that access to clean water is a human right. They say that this right is just as important as the right "to life, liberty and security of person," which is set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In an April 2004 Ipsos-Reid survey, 97 per cent of Canadians agreed that water should be recognized as a human right.

➲ If you were responding to a survey question that asked whether water is a human right, would you answer yes or no? Explain the reasons for your judgment.

Control over Water

Like other countries, Canada controls the water within its borders. The federal, provincial, and territorial governments decide how to use this water. Governments, for example, make rules about dumping sewage into fresh water. They may also decide to sell water or to divert it to dry regions or to use it to generate hydroelectric power.

Diverting water and creating dams can be controversial. When the governments of Alberta and Canada started to build a dam across the Oldman River near Pincher Creek, for example, some people opposed the plan. They said it would damage the environment. Those who wanted the dam argued that it would provide water for farms in a region that often suffers droughts — dry weather. They also said that the dam could be a source of hydroelectric power. The project went ahead, and the dam was completed in 1992.

Selling water can also be controversial. In 2008, the Canadian government discouraged the removal and sale of water from rivers and lakes by tanker ships, trucks, and pipelines. Some people are afraid that this Canadian policy may be challenged by the World Trade Organization and the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement. But the government says that water in rivers and lakes is not a product, so it should not be part of any international trade agreement.

Figure 12-8 The Oldman River Dam near Pincher Creek, Alberta. During the 1980s, some members of the Piikani Nation and the Friends of the Oldman River Society fought against this dam, saying it would harm traditional use of the land and plant, animal, and fish habitats. Many First Nations view water as sacred.

The Worldwide Water Crisis

Countries that have a lot of fresh water are likely to face increased international pressure to share their water with countries that do not have enough. In her book *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, activist Maude Barlow says that the right to clean water is a complex global issue that demands everyone's attention. Barlow believes that

- the world is running out of fresh water
- every day, more people are living without access to clean water
- powerful international corporations are taking control of Earth's fresh water and selling it to make a profit

VOICES

Access to safe water is a fundamental human need and, therefore, a basic human right.

— Kofi Annan, former secretary-general of the United Nations, 2001

Recall . . . Reflect . . . Respond

1. Explain why sharing Canada's water with people in the rest of the world is controversial.
2. In March 2004, columnist Wendy R. Holm of the magazine *Country Life in BC* wrote: "Whether you love the NAFTA or hate the NAFTA is not the point. Whether you support or oppose water exports is not the point. The point is sovereignty. Canada must have absolute discretion over the management of her water resources. In perpetuity."

   With a partner, prepare point-form notes you could use as the basis of a written response supporting or opposing Holm's position.

Figure 12-9 Global Challenges

How have people used internationalism to address contemporary global issues?

Suppose some people in your school regularly left candy wrappers, empty juice containers, and other garbage in the halls. This would probably be an issue that you and others in your school could tackle and resolve.

But what if littering were common throughout your community? The littering problem would be too complex for individuals to handle on their own. This situation would need to be resolved by the larger community. But many other issues are also too complex for individuals or communities to handle on their own.

Many contemporary global issues are so complex that even national governments cannot deal with them on their own. This is why many countries choose to work with the international community to tackle major challenges such as poverty, hunger, disease, debt, climate change, human rights, and conflict.

Picturing Global Issues

Poverty

Figure 12-10 In southwestern China, children help their parents search garbage dumps to find items that can be recycled and sold. Millions of people in China do not have enough money to meet their basic needs for food, safe drinking water, health care, shelter, sanitation, and education.

Figure 12-11 In northern France, a charitable group hands out food to immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. Feeding the millions of people who have fled conflict and poverty in their homelands is a major global challenge.

Hunger

Human Rights

Figure 12-12 In November 2007, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour visited Afghanistan and spoke about human rights. Arbour said, "There's a critical moment in human rights history; it's happening right now, with many tragic events coming together to give the human rights movement a real wake-up call."

Internationalism and Poverty

In 2006, the World Bank estimated that more than a billion people — out of the 6.65 billion people on Earth — lived in **absolute poverty**. The United Nations defines absolute poverty as a "condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services."

In July 2007, Oxfam, an international non-governmental organization, and a network of about 80 aid agencies reported that 43 per cent of Iraqis were living in absolute poverty. Many basic services were in very short supply. Seventy per cent of Iraqis had no access to clean water. Many people could not register for help getting food because they were internal refugees who did not have a home address. Hospitals were short of medical staff because many health care workers had fled the country or been killed. More than 800 000 Iraqi children had dropped out of school because they lived in refugee camps or because their school building was being used to shelter people who were homeless.

Conflict

Figure 12-13 In 2008, Iraqi children in Baghdad inspect the wreckage of a car after a raid by American forces. The United Nations and international non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent are trying to help Iraqis rebuild their country despite the continuing conflict.

Debt

Figure 12-15 In 2008, a mother in Harare, Zimbabwe, helps her child with his school work. This mother can no longer afford to pay school fees. Because Zimbabwe has not repaid its loans from the International Monetary Fund, the IMF has stopped lending the country money. As of 2008, funds for education and other social services had been cut.

Disease

Figure 12-14 A child plays in polluted water in Jakarta, Indonesia. Every year, millions of children die because they contract diseases from water that contains viruses, bacteria, parasites, and poisonous chemicals.

Climate Change

Figure 12-16 In December 2007, scientists and United Nations representatives met in Bali, Indonesia, to plan ways to combat the effects of climate change. Experts warn that climate change threatens the lives of people all over the world, especially those living in developing countries.

Figure 12-17 Poverty and Education

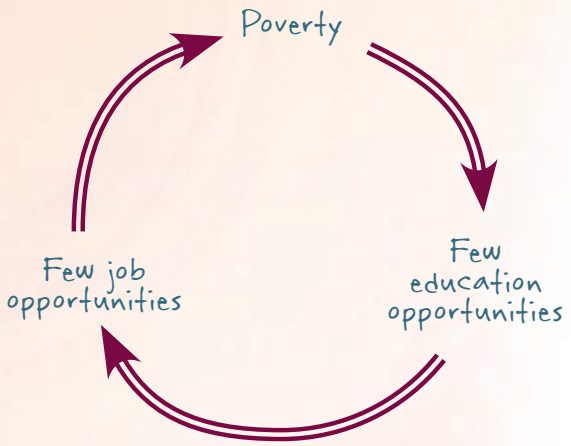


Figure 12-18 In July 2005, more than 200 000 people marched in Edinburgh, Scotland, to support a campaign organized by Make Poverty History. Many organizations are joining forces to try to end world poverty.

Causes and Effects of Poverty

Poverty often causes other serious problems. When people do not have enough money to buy food, they go hungry. When they do not have enough money to buy clean drinking water, they may contract diseases from drinking polluted water. If they lack food and water, their lives and the lives of their families will be in danger. In circumstances like these, people may even go to war to get what they need to survive.

Oxfam has identified the following causes and effects of poverty:

- Lack of education — In some countries, schools charge fees that many families cannot afford. Children may be forced to go to work to help their family survive. People who have not received a basic education have trouble finding jobs and may become locked into a cycle of poverty.
- Lack of access to resources — Millions of farmers do not have the resources — land, water, credit, and access to markets — they need to survive. In some countries, the soil is poor or there is not enough water to grow crops. Seeds for planting may be too expensive, or farmers may not be able to sell their crops for a fair price.
- Conflict and war — People in some countries have been forced to leave their homes because of war. These people often find it impossible to work and earn money. Millions of people in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, fled when their communities became battle zones.
- Trade rules — Farmers, labourers, and factory workers can be affected by international trade rules, such as high tariffs and bans on certain imports. Because of rules like these, some people cannot sell their goods and services. When developing countries are forced to accept World Trade Organization policies favouring developed countries, the people in the developing countries suffer.
- Discrimination — Within countries, members of minority groups often have limited access to jobs, resources, and government help. In some countries, for example, widows are not allowed to earn a living to support their families. In other countries, people who belong to ethnic minorities can work only at low-paying jobs.

In your own words, explain the meaning of "cycle of poverty," which appears in the first bullet. If you wish, you may show this as a diagram. How might conflict and discrimination cause the cycle to continue? Suggest one action that a government could take to help break the cycle.

Internationalism and Hunger

Poverty can lead to hunger, malnutrition, and starvation. Most of the time, 850 million people in the world are hungry. As of 2008, every day, 20 000 people — including 18 000 children — die of hunger. One of the greatest global challenges is to create the economic, social, and political conditions that will make sure everyone has enough food.

In recent decades, this challenge has become the focus of international efforts. In November 1996, the United Nations organized the first World Food Summit. Delegates from 185 countries and the European Union met in Rome, Italy. They vowed to reduce by half the number of hungry people in the world. They set 2015 as the target date for achieving this goal.

In 2000, the UN said that its first millennium development goal was to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. But reaching this goal is proving to be very difficult. Experts predict that it will be a long time before it is achieved.

Short-Term and Long-Term Challenges

People suffering from hunger may need emergency relief or long-term help — or both. Wars, earthquakes, and storms may destroy food crops and supplies. In May 2008, for example, a devastating cyclone hit Myanmar. In the short term, the world community was concerned about how to provide food to the people of the country. In the longer term, experts worried that farmers in Myanmar might not be able to plant crops for the next season because rice fields had been destroyed.

Non-governmental organizations — NGOs — are trying to reduce hunger and eliminate its causes. The Mennonite Central Committee of Alberta is an example of an organization that distributes emergency food to people in need. In 2008, for example, the MCC distributed food to people in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

The MCC also helps solve longer-term hunger problems. Members of the NGO work with communities in Burundi, for example, on soil conservation projects that will help people farm more effectively. In Kenya, the MCC helps build sand dams to capture and store water during the rainy season. During the dry season, this water supply is used to increase production of fruit and vegetables.

Web Connection

To learn more about international efforts to eradicate hunger, go to this web site and follow the links.

www.UnderstandingNationalism.ca

FYI

Developing countries are not the only ones where hunger is a problem. In Canada, for example, one of the world's wealthiest countries, 11 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Between 1989 and 2007, the number of people using food banks increased by 91 per cent. In March 2007 alone, more than 720 000 people relied on food banks to feed themselves and their families.

Figure 12-19 In 2007, some Alberta farmers volunteered their time and machinery to farm a plot of land in Cheadle, just east of Calgary. This harvest is a project of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which uses donations from churches and individuals to send food to hungry people anywhere in the world.

Internationalism and Disease

Poverty contributes to disease, as well as to hunger and malnutrition. People who do not have enough healthy food cannot fight disease as effectively as people who are well-fed. People who are poor cannot afford medicine or the education to understand how to prevent disease. In addition, many governments cannot afford to provide their citizens with the kind of health care that Canadians take for granted.

HIV and AIDS in Africa

In Canada and other developed countries, an AIDS diagnosis was once considered a death sentence. This is no longer the case. Scientists have developed drugs that help people with the virus survive. And prevention strategies have helped slow the spread of the disease. In 2006, only about 0.3 per cent of Canadians had AIDS.

The situation is different in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, about 1.6 million people died of AIDS in 2007. An estimated 22.5 million people were living with the virus. Few Africans who have AIDS can afford the drugs they need, and many countries do not have the medical resources to cope with what has become a pandemic.

In 2001, the United Nations appointed Canadian politician and diplomat Stephen Lewis special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Lewis held this post until 2006. Lewis believes that AIDS and poverty are closely connected and that the link between poverty and disease is "probably the major issue on the planet."

He said, "Disease breeds poverty because it completely destroys the income of a family, and poverty breeds disease because nobody has anything to eat, and immune systems grind down."

Lewis's efforts, as well as those of the World Health Organization, individuals, groups, and governments, have highlighted the challenge of HIV/AIDS in Africa and elsewhere. At the UN World Summit in 2005, for example, leaders set the goal of achieving universal access to treatment by 2010.

As a step toward this goal, governments have relaxed rules so that generic drug companies can make cheaper AIDS drugs and distribute them in developing countries. NGOs such as the Stephen Lewis Foundation have launched awareness and treatment programs.

Though these measures have helped, they have not solved the problem. At the end of 2006, only about 28 per cent of the people in the world who needed treatment for AIDS were receiving it.

What might be one long-term consequence of allowing people to die of AIDS? Suggest an action that could help avoid this consequence.

VOICES

One of the worst things about AIDS is that it just never stops — you scramble to find the money to get medical treatment for a sister or a husband who falls sick, and then it's not enough and that person dies and you go into debt to pay for the funeral, and then you have a couple more orphans to try to find school fees for and you don't get a crop in the ground because you're dealing with all this, and then there's no food and you can't go to the city to look for work because you're nursing someone else. There is no respite.

— Stephanie Nolen, Canadian journalist and author, 2006

Figure 12-20 In August 2006, Stephen Lewis met grandmothers from sub-Saharan Africa at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto. These women were raising grandchildren whose parents had died of AIDS.

Internationalism and Debt

Suppose you earn $3000 a month — but your monthly expenses total $4000. These expenses include food, shelter, heat, electricity — and payments on a loan. How deeply in debt would you be at the end of a month? A year?

Countries can also go into debt. Many of the poorest countries in the world must spend so much money to pay off their debts to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank than they do not have enough left over to provide health, education, and social services for their own citizens.

During the 1970s and 1980s, for example, the Jamaican government borrowed heavily from the World Bank, the IMF, and private banks. The government believed it could repay the loans as the Jamaican economy grew. More people would be working and paying taxes.

But the country's economy did not grow. More Jamaicans became unemployed, so they paid less in taxes. By 2005, the Jamaican government owed $6.5 billion. More than 10 per cent of its tax revenues went to repay loans and cover interest charges. As a result, the government had less money to spend on services.

Web Connection

To find out more about how debt relief has helped countries in Africa, go to this web site and follow the links.

www.UnderstandingNationalism.ca

Odious Debt

Odious debt is debt that results from a loan to a government that uses the money to oppress the people of its country or for its own personal use. Probe International, an NGO that monitors Canada's delivery of foreign aid, says that debt is odious if

- it was incurred without the consent of the country's people
- it did not benefit the country's people
- the lender of the money was aware of these two conditions

odious debt

- a debt that is hateful or repulsive
- money that is borrowed by a country without the consent of citizens
- money borrowed by a government for use against its own citizens
- borrowed money used by government officials for their personal gain

For much of the second half of the 20th century, the government of South Africa enforced a racist system called apartheid. Under apartheid, non-white people suffered extreme discrimination. This system finally ended in the early 1990s.

During the years of apartheid, the South African government borrowed an estimated $18 billion to enforce its racist laws. Because non-white South Africans were not allowed to vote, they had no say in the government's decision to borrow the money. The loans did not benefit them in any way. The international banks and other money lenders were aware of the apartheid laws and the brutal tactics of the South African government. Today, the South African government is still repaying these loans.

Organizations such as Probe International, as well as many governments, argue that no country should be required to repay odious debts. But critics say that if the debts were wiped out, corrupt governments would just borrow and misuse more money.

Many people believe that the money borrowed to support apartheid in South Africa is odious debt. Should South Africa still be required to repay this money? Explain your response.

Figure 12-21 In 1986, South African police officers patrolled the streets of Alexandra Township with loaded guns. In 2008, South Africa was still paying off international loans that previous governments had used to pay the salaries of the large police force that was required to enforce apartheid.

Internationalism and Climate Change

Climate change may be the most pressing global issue of the 21st century. Many scientists agree that human activity is causing Earth's climate to change more quickly than in the past. In North America, for example, people burn a lot of fossil fuels — coal, oil, and gas — to heat their homes and run their cars, airplanes, and industries. The greenhouse gas emissions that come from burning fossil fuels are a major cause of climate change.

In South America, tropical rainforests are being cut down to make room for farming, ranching, and mining. Fewer trees are left to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help reduce the effects of climate change.

These factors — and others — contribute to the melting of the polar ice caps. Many scientists believe that this melting will speed up climate change and cause destructive flooding along the coasts of all continents.

Members of the international community know that climate change affects everyone. They have begun to work together to introduce measures to slow its pace.

The United Nations Environment Programme provides global leadership in dealing with environmental issues. UNEP helps educate and encourage people in governments, businesses, and communities to work together to use the world's resources wisely.

The UN also holds annual climate change conferences. In 2005, for example, delegates from 189 countries — along with scientists, business leaders, and representatives of young people and NGOs — attended the conference in Montréal.

Figure 12-22 Cartoonist Peter Pismestrovic created this cartoon to celebrate Earth Day in April 2008. Carbon dioxide — CO_2 — is one of the main greenhouse gases that affect Earth's climate. How does Pismestrovic view the threat of CO_2 emissions?

Youth and Climate Change

At that Montréal conference, five youth delegates asked international representatives to solve the climate change problem. Catherine Gauthier, a member of the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, was one of the speakers. Gauthier, who was 16 at the time, told world leaders that the future of world youth is in their hands.

Young people around the world are also taking action. They are finding out about how climate change affects them and their communities. They are working with other young people around the world and with NGOs like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund. They are also working with politicians in their own communities and regions to solve climate change problems close to home.

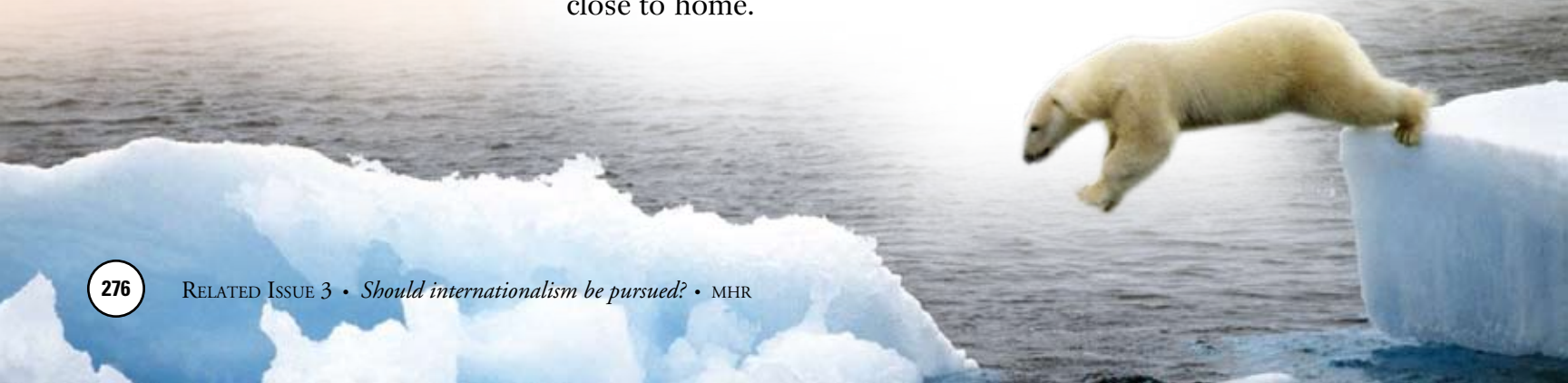


Figure 12-23 The Arctic ice cap is melting much faster than scientists predicted — about 30 years ahead of forecasts. This melting speeds up the pace of global climate change. And warmer temperatures and less ice put the survival of polar bears at risk.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sheila Watt-Cloutier
Defending the Right to Be Cold

When Sheila Watt-Cloutier was growing up in Kuujjuaq, a community on the Koksoak River in northern Québec, she and her friends never wore shorts and T-shirts in summer. It was just too cold.

But things have changed. Many summer days are now so warm that Kuujjuaq residents often go down to the river to cool off.

Watt-Cloutier does not view this as an improvement. She believes that the Inuit have the right to be cold — and she has devoted her life to defending this right by raising awareness of climate change. The cold makes the Inuit way of life possible.

After attending McGill University, Watt-Cloutier worked as a translator and educational counsellor. Much of her work focused on health, social, and youth issues — and this led to involvement in regional, national, and international Inuit organizations. She served as chair of the Canadian Inuit Circumpolar Council and later as chair of the international body.

When she worked at the ICC, Watt-Cloutier helped negotiate an international ban on the use of some toxic chemicals. These chemicals were carried by air and water from industrialized regions to the Arctic. They were also absorbed into the bodies of animals — seals, polar bears, whales, and caribou — and fish that Inuit hunt and eat. The breast milk of many Inuit mothers is contaminated with toxic chemicals. So the mothers have been advised either not to breastfeed their babies or not to eat meat killed in the hunt.

The Inuit are on the land every day, and for years, they have been noticing changes. Ice forms later in the year and breaks up earlier.

Figure 12-24 Environmental activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier stands on a breakwater in Iqaluit. Watt-Cloutier has won many awards, including a National Aboriginal Achievement Award and the United Nations' Mahbub ul Haq Award for Human Development. In 2007, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Traditional winter and summer travel routes have changed because the ice pack is different. And animals such as polar bear, caribou, and seals — which the Inuit rely on — have changed their habits.

Watt-Cloutier believes that these changes are linked to changes that are happening elsewhere — and that her people are the early warning system for the rest of the world. She says, "Global warming connects us all . . . The Inuit hunters who fall through the depleting and unpredictable sea ice are connected to the cars we drive, the industries we rely upon, and the disposable world we have become."

EXPLORATIONS

1. How do Sheila Watt-Cloutier's words show the importance of an international approach to resolving environmental issues? Do you agree with her?
2. Watt-Cloutier shows that the actions of one person can matter, even when dealing with global issues. Identify one action you could take to help reduce global climate change.

Internationalism and Human Rights

World War II showed the international community that countries must work together to protect human rights. Otherwise, genocides like the Holocaust would happen again.

Members of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, soon after the UN was founded. The declaration, among other things, was supposed to guarantee that everyone in the world would have "the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Why would creating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be an important step in fighting human rights abuses? How successful do you think the declaration has been?

When a country violates the rights of its own citizens or of the citizens of another country, the UN can take action to stop the abuse. But political alliances and loyalties sometimes make taking action difficult.

Before the UN can act, all five permanent members of the UN Security Council — China, France, Russia, Britain, and the United States — must agree. A majority of the other Security Council members must also agree. If even one permanent member rejects a proposal, the UN cannot act.

Figure 12-25 In May 2008, a deadly cyclone ripped through coastal areas of Myanmar. This woman and child sat outside their destroyed home. People faced desperate food and water shortages because their government refused to allow international aid agencies into the country.

Human Rights in Myanmar

In 2007, the people of Myanmar held peaceful protests against the military rulers who control their country. The people wanted a say in their government's decisions. But the rulers responded by killing protesters and arresting the Buddhist monks who were the leaders of the protests.

Human Rights Watch, an international NGO, said that the situation in Myanmar was an international problem and asked the UN Security Council to stop the human rights abuses. But some countries — including China and Russia — said that Myanmar is a sovereign country. No other country has a right to force changes in Myanmar. As a result, the UN did nothing.

In May 2008, a cyclone killed tens of thousands of people in Myanmar. Survivors were left without food, clean water, or shelter. But the military rulers refused offers of international aid.

The French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, warned the rulers that refusing aid could make them guilty of crimes against humanity. Nobel Peace Prize–winner Desmond Tutu agreed. He said that the Myanmar government had "effectively declared war on its own population."

By late May 2008, Myanmar's rulers had relented somewhat. Myanmar is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries. The rulers told this group that it would be allowed to bring aid and some medical workers into the country and that UN agencies would be allowed to work with ASEAN.

<<< CheckBack

You read about Myanmar in Chapter 4.

Internationalism and Conflict

One of the main goals of the United Nations and other international organizations is to maintain peace and security in the world. But keeping peace is not easy. Conflicts are often complex and difficult to solve. As a result, the world community often struggles to find solutions that work.

Conflict in Darfur

The conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan shows how complicated maintaining peace can become. About 60 per cent of Darfuris are farmers, and most are black people. Many of the other 40 per cent are nomadic or semi-nomadic, and most are of Arabic background. Nomads move from place to place looking for food or pastureland.

In recent decades, Darfur suffered a series of droughts. Both farmers and nomads suffered. The land was not producing enough food for either group, so they began competing for land.

In March 2003, this competition became violent. Rebel groups attacked government targets. The rebels said that the Sudanese government, which is dominated by Arabs, was helping Arabs but not black farmers. Darfur has been in a state of civil war ever since. The government and members of militias — unoffical military groups — loyal to the government have been fighting against rebel groups.

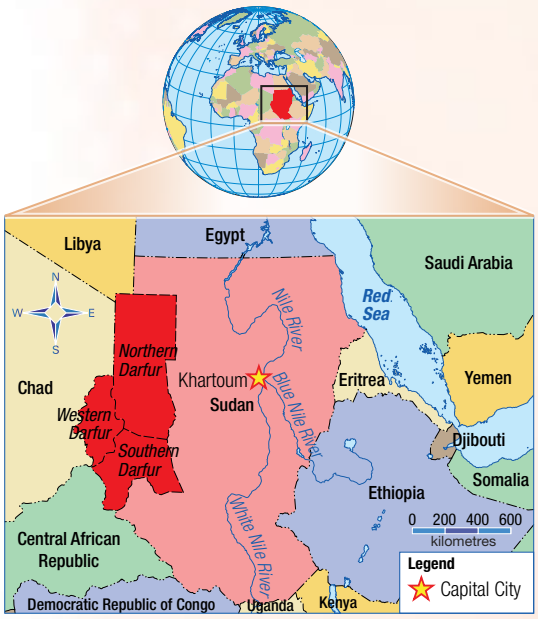
In 2004, the UN named Darfur the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. By 2007, about 200 000 Darfuris had been killed, and about 2.5 million people had fled their homes.

The UN and the African Union — an international organization made up of African countries — have been trying to negotiate with the Sudanese government to stop the killing. The Security Council has imposed economic sanctions on Sudan. The International Criminal Court investigated instances of war crimes and genocide. The court issued arrest warrants for some members of the Sudanese government, the military, and a government-backed militia group called the Janjaweed. But none of these actions stopped the killing.

In 2004, the African Union sent peacekeepers to Darfur. But the force was too small. In 2008, the UN finally persuaded the Sudanese government to allow UN peacekeepers into the country to work with the African Union peacekeepers.

Figure 12-26 In June 2004, these refugees in Darfur welcomed African Union soldiers. Their sign says, "We need international forces to protect us."

Figure 12-27 Darfur, Sudan



To see a larger map of Sudan, turn to the map appendix.

Recall . . . Reflect . . . Respond

1. For each of the seven global issues — poverty, hunger, disease, debt, climate change, human rights, and conflict — jot notes describing how internationalists have tried to resolve the issues.
2. With a partner, develop criteria to rate the success of these international efforts. Your criteria might include the following:
   - Have these efforts improved the living conditions of people around the world?
   - Have these efforts reduced disease?

   Use your criteria to rate the success of international efforts on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not very successful: 5 = very successful).

Figure 12-28 In December 2005, the World Trade Organization held meetings in Hong Kong. In Manila, Philippines, this woman and many other Filipinos protested WTO policies.

Figure 12-29 In December 2005, thousands of people from across Asia marched through Hong Kong to protest WTO policies. How might protests like these affect international trade policies?

How effective is internationalism in addressing contemporary global issues?

In 2000, the UN established eight international targets — its millennium development goals. These goals included cutting world poverty in half, providing all children with at least a primary school education, and fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS. By 2008, it looked as if none of these goals would be reached by the target date of 2015.

➲ Does the fact that the world is not likely to achieve the millennium development goals by 2015 suggest that international efforts to solve the world's problems have failed? Explain your response.

International Trade

Some international experts say that trade among countries will solve many of the world's problems. They believe that trade improves everyone's prosperity and that prosperous countries are more likely to live in peace with one another. They are less likely to go to war.

This view is reflected in the policies of the World Trade Organization, which was created to promote and regulate international trade. According to the WTO, a system of world trade promotes peace by helping people in all countries improve their economic situation, settle disputes, and reduce inequality.

Disagreement over the WTO

But critics argue that the WTO favours richer developed countries at the expense of poorer developing countries. They say, for example, that farmers in developed countries have advantages that farmers in less developed countries do not.

One advantage is farm subsidies. A farm subsidy is money a government gives to farmers to help meet expenses. This money enables farmers to sell their products at lower prices than if they had to pay all their expenses themselves. These lower prices help farmers — and multinational farm corporations — compete internationally.

In Europe, the United States, and Canada, many farmers receive government subsidies. As a result, farm products from these countries can be sold in developing countries at lower prices than local products. To compete, local farmers must reduce their prices. This means that they cannot make enough money to live on.

In 2005, the WTO held a meeting in Hong Kong. This meeting sparked protests in many Asian countries. The protesters believed that the WTO is more interested in helping wealthy countries and multinational corporations make money than in trying to improve the lives of people in developing countries.

Internationalism and Nation-States

People disagree over the effects of internationalism on the future of nation-states. Some people say that internationalism is improving people's lives. They say international institutions like the United Nations are relieving suffering, protecting the innocent, and making people around the world more secure.

Others say that the trade and financial policies of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund do more harm than good. They say that these institutions have also reduced the independence of national governments. When the World Bank or the IMF lends money to a developing country, for example, they often require the country's government to change its policies. These changes often include cutting spending on social programs, such as education and health care.

In failed states such as Zimbabwe and Myanmar, the rulers may care little about the welfare of the country's citizens. How can international institutions or organizations help people in a nation-state where the rulers are corrupt?

<<< CheckBack

You read about the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Chapter 9.

Taking Turns

Is internationalism the only way to address contemporary global issues?

The students responding to this question are Rick, who was born in the United States but moved to Fort McMurray with his family when he was 10; Violet, a Métis who is a member of the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement; and Jane, who lives in Calgary and is descended from black Loyalists who fled to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution.

Rick

I say that individual action is the way to go. Governments are slow, and when you have a lot of governments trying to agree on something, things get even slower. We should take action on our own — change to energy-saving light bulbs, use less water, drink fair-trade coffee, or sign an online petition.

When it comes to global issues like disease, I think internationalism works. International groups like the World Health Organization have been successful. Developing countries can't do everything on their own — and it's in our interest to make sure that they're peaceful and prosperous. If they aren't, our own peace and prosperity could be affected. So the international community needs to work together to find solutions. And I think it's doing that, even if progress is pretty slow.

Violet

Jane

I don't know. I'm not sure that internationalism is really working, at least the way things are set up now. Maybe some things are improving. But countries in the developed world may be taking advantage of countries in the developing world — and developing countries won't put up with this forever. It's bound to create resentment, and what happens when this resentment boils over?

Your Turn

How would you respond to the question Rick, Violet, and Jane are answering? Explain the reasons for your answer.

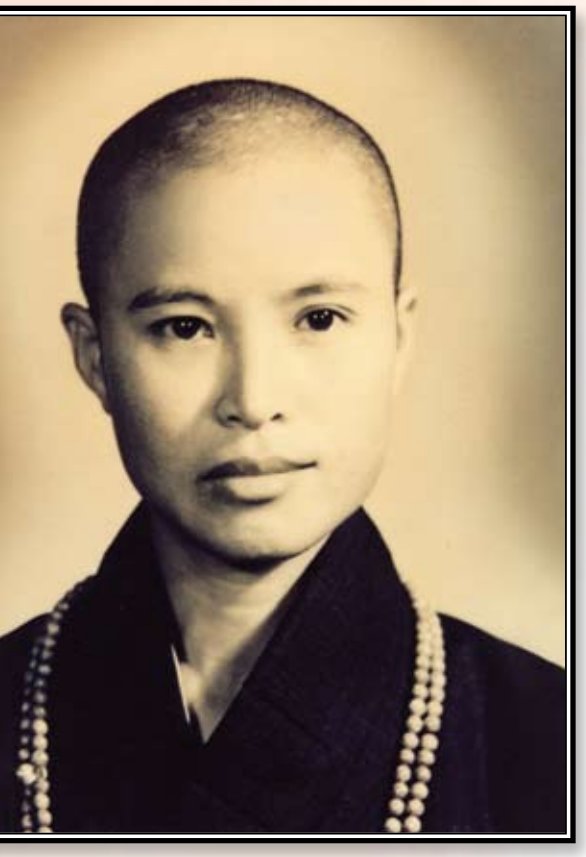


Figure 12-30 Cheng Yen, a Buddhist nun, founded the Tzu Chi Foundation in 1966. Cheng says that "the hope of humanity lies in mutual help."

Decline versus Change

Some people believe that the development of international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization has reduced the power of individual nation-states. In a global economy, for example, the governments of countries cannot make their own decisions without considering international trade rules, the wishes of multinational corporations, and the economies of other countries.

But some people view things differently. They see the situation as a change in the way people see themselves in the world and in the way power is distributed among governments, businesses, and communities of people.

In 1999, Kofi Annan who was then secretary-general of the United Nations, said, "The United Nations once dealt only with governments. By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving governments, international organizations, the business community and civil society. In today's world, we depend on each other."

Civil Society

Civil society refers to non-government and non-business organizations of various kinds. These organizations may be large or small and involve community groups, faith-based groups, labour unions, and universities. In the view of many people, civil society helps connect citizens, nation-states, and international organizations. These links give individuals the chance to influence policy and events at local, regional, national, and international levels.

In a 1997 article in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, international affairs specialist Jessica Matthews wrote that national governments are now sharing political, social, and security powers "with businesses, with international organizations and with a multitude of citizens' groups." Some of these citizens' groups, wrote Matthews, are influencing even the most powerful states to move in particular directions.

Civil society groups can sometimes go where the United Nations and individual governments cannot. After the May 2008 cyclone in Myanmar, for example, some Buddhist charities were allowed to take aid and supplies into the country. And the Tzu Chi Foundation, which is based in Taiwan, was allowed to send volunteers.

Figure 12-31 In May 2008, members of the Taiwan-based Tzu Chi Foundation load boxes of blankets for earthquake victims in China. Even though the governments of Beijing and Taiwan are not on good terms, Chinese officials welcomed the aid from the foundation.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

For many people, the United Nations represents internationalism at work. But will the UN be able to deal with global issues in the 21st century? Here is how three people with a vital interest in the UN have responded to this question.

Gareth Evans is a former Australian politician who has served on the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. He said the following in a speech to Foreign Affairs Canada in 2005.

> No organization in the world embodies as many dreams, yet delivers as many frustrations, as the United Nations. . . . There are plenty who are justifiably now skeptical that the UN and its member states will ever be capable of responding to the challenge of reform . . . But we have no alternative but to keep on trying — all of us.

Srgjan Kerim is the former foreign minister of Macedonia. In 2007, he was elected president of the United Nations General Assembly. He urged members to form partnerships so that everyone could benefit from globalization.

> It is possible, I believe, to forge a new culture of international relations, by demonstrating the courage to rise above ourselves. The UN needs to [build] . . . a new culture of international relations based on greater trust and mutual co-operation and fairer economic consensus.

Since 1978, writer and novelist **Shashi Tharoor** has served the UN in a variety of roles. The following is from an article published in a 2005 issue of the *New Internationalist* under the title "Saving Humanity from Hell: The Failure of the UN to Make Heaven on Earth Should Not Obscure Its Mundane Achievements."

> The UN is not simply a security organization; it is not a sort of NATO for the world. When the present crisis has passed, the world will still be facing (to use Secretary-General Kofi Annan's phrase) innumerable "problems without passports" that cross all frontiers uninvited; . . . These are problems that no one country, however powerful, can solve on its own — as someone once said about water pollution, we all live downstream. They cry out for solutions that, like the problems themselves, cross frontiers.

EXPLORATIONS

1. In a phrase or a single sentence, sum up the message of each quotation.
2. Does a common thread run through the words of Gareth Evans, Srgjan Kerim, and Shashi Tharoor? If so, explain what it is. If not, explain the differences.
3. With a partner discuss this statement: If the United Nations did not exist, people would have to invent it.

THINK...PARTICIPATE...RESEARCH...COMMUNICATE...

1. The chapter issue you have been exploring asks how effectively internationalism addresses contemporary global issues. One contemporary global issue is hunger and its effects on many people and countries. To comment on this issue, artist Trevor Ford created the cartoon shown in Figure 12-32 for *The Post* of Zambia.

   a) Explain the message that Ford is trying to send.

   b) How does this cartoon relate to the chapter-issue question?

   c) How would you respond to the chapter-issue question? Explain the reasons for your judgment.

Figure 12-32

2. Marhall McLuhan used the phrase "global village" to express his belief that the people of the world are linked more closely than ever. Explain how McLuhan's concept of a global village affects nationalism. Can nationalism continue to exist in a global village? Is the idea of nationalism out of date — or is it more important than ever?

3. Work with a group of three or four to design and create a poster promoting international action on one of the global issues explored in this chapter (poverty, hunger, disease, debt, climate change, human rights, and conflict) or a global issue of great importance to the group.

   Create a statement that outlines the motivation, aim, and message of the poster. Present your poster to the class.

4. For decades, singer-songwriter and political activist Bob Geldof has been involved in celebrity events designed to raise awareness of and eliminate poverty. During his speech accepting the 2005 Man of Peace award, which was presented in Rome, Geldof said, "We live in a broken world which has never been healthier, wealthier, or freer of conflict, but 500 kilometres south of here, they die of want . . . It's not only intellectually absurd, it's morally repulsive."

   In your own words, explain Geldof's message. In your statement, be sure to note the relationship between Geldof's words and the need for international action on global issues.

5. According to the UN charter, this international organization is responsible for protecting the citizens of the world. But UN rules, which allow any of the five permanent members of the Security Council to veto — say no to — proposed actions, often interfere with the UN's ability to meet this responsibility.

   Create a cartoon, drawing, or electronic presentation that comments on this situation. Remember to use respectful words and images. Stereotypes are unacceptable. Humour should result from the situation, not from the characters in the cartoon.

Skill Builder to Your Challenge

Write a Letter and Put It All Together

The challenge for Related Issue 3 asks you to create a time capsule that represents your informed position on whether internationalism should be pursued.

In this skill builder, you will write a letter to readers in the future. Your letter will examine a global issue and predict whether an international approach will have resolved this issue by the time the time capsule is opened.

Step 1: Choose a global issue

Begin by choosing one of the global issues — poverty, hunger, disease, debt, climate change, human rights, or conflict — explored in this chapter. This will become the focus of your letter.

Step 2: Think about your point of view

Think about how you will decide whether an international approach should be pursued.

List two or three criteria you will use to support your judgment. Write each criterion in the form of a question.

Keep your criteria handy. As you plan your letter to the future, think about how well each example or event does — or does not — meet your criteria.

Step 3: Use a point-proof-comment organizer to conduct research

A point-proof-comment organizer like the one shown on this page can help you express your opinion and collect evidence to support your opinion.

For each point that you write on your organizer, add a proof — or evidence — and your comment on how this evidence supports your opinion on the future of internationalism.

Step 4: Plan and write your letter.

Plan what you want to say in your letter. Then write a first draft. You will probably need to revise your letter several times. Consider following this revision schedule.

- Revision 1 — Share your first draft with a partner or your teacher. Revise your letter to reflect this feedback.
- Revision 2 — Check your revision to make sure your letter is logical, and includes your evidence and the criteria you used to reach your judgment. Ask a classmate or your teacher to read it. Revise your letter to reflect the feedback.
- Revision 3 — Polish your letter. Check spelling and grammar. Make sure that your opinion is clearly expressed.

Point–Proof–Comment Organizer
The Future of Internationalism
Issue _____

Point	
Proof	
Comment	
Point	
Proof	